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NWG/RFC 446
NIC 14068

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25-JAN-73

Rcvd 2Feb73

Proposal to consider a Network Program Resource Notebook

The recent requests by Jean Iseli of MITRE for information about all resources of type X available on the network (where X=macro processors, data management systems, and electronagnetic wave analysis programs) lead me to suggest that the NIC be a repository for the replies. 1

Since the exchange of knowledge and techniques (not to mention programs) is a central motivating factor in the development of the ARPANET, it seems only reasonable that we begin to systematize the process now that someone (MITRE and the government agencies on whose behalf it is acting) feels there is enough information to be worth collecting. 1a

Obviously, the network community should be in a position to profit from such compilation at least as much as outside agencies. 1b

The NIC already has catalog and keyword capabilities for the Journal and a large index of computer-related documents which are not on-line. I would presume that extending this system to include programs and documentation would not be a major task and would probably bring immediate payoffs in terms of increased effectiveness of research sites. 2

This suggestion does not touch on the important larger issue, namely, what obligations does the network community have to act as a service and information resource to the outside world (government agencies in particular) as opposed to its presumed major function of learning about how to build and use computer networks and its actual major function of research in many areas of computing which have nothing to do with networks at all. 3

I feel that the confusion between the ARPANET as a service network and the ARPANET as an experiment in the line of network research, and the frustrations and communication failures resulting from superimposing network responsibilities on top of existing research projects, have not received adequate contemplation by the network community. 3a

I also feel that the ambiguous status of the network has lead to a sharp division between research/maintenance sites and government agency user sites, a situation which only can exacerbate my own feeling that to some extent the former are being exploited for non-research purposes in a manner that has been fairly rare in the history of ARPA/IPT. 3b